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Generally they either cost you in time, web hosting restrictions, or modifying your free web pages by adding popups, banners, or other adverts. When looking for free web hosting (especially on search engines), you should beware that there are also a large number of commercial web hosts that claim to offer free hosting services, but those often have a catch, such as paying an excessive amount for a domain name or other service, and therefore aren't really free. The free free hosting guide below will give you some tips for finding the right free webhosting company for you. How do the free web hosts make money?

The free website hosts often make money in other ways, such as putting banners, popups, or popunders ads on your free webpages. Some free web hosting companies do not put ads on your site, but require you as the webmaster to click on banners in their control panel or signup process, or just display banners in the file manager in hopes you will click them. Some lure visitors with free hosting in hopes you will upgrade and pay for advanced features. A few send you occasional emails with ads, or may even sell your email address. A new method that is becoming popular is requiring a certain number of "quality" forum posting, usually as a means of getting free content for them and thereby being able to display more ads to their website visitors. Are free web hosts reliable?

Generally no, although there are a few exceptions. If the free host is making money from banner ads or other revenue sources directly from the free hosting service, then they likely will stay in business, provided someone doesn't abuse their web hosting server with spam, hacking, etc., as often happens to new free web hosting companies with liberal signup policies. If the freehost accepts just anyone, especially with an automated instant activation and it offers features such as PHP or CGI, then some users invariably try to find ways to abuse it, which can cause the free server to have a lot of downtime or the free web server to be slow. It is best if you choose a very selective free hoster which only accepts quality sites (assuming you have one). Uses for free webspace

Free web hosting is not recommended for businesses unless you can get domain hosting from an ad-free host that is very selective. Other reasons for using free hosting websites would be to learn the basics of website hosting, have a personal website with pictures of your family or whatever, a doorway page to another web site of yours, or to try scripts you have developed on different web hosting environments.

How to find the right free web hosting site

The best place to search for free webhosting is on a free webspace directory website (i.e. a web site which specializes in listing only free web hosting providers). There are some which add new free hosts pretty much every week (and if it is updated often, has usually had to delete about as many). There are also many which almost never update their web site, and a huge percent of their links and info are outdated. Unfortunately that includes most of the directories that were the best several years ago. The problem is free hosts change so often, and most fold up in less than a year (often even after only a day or two), that it is hard to keep such a freehosting directory up-to-date. The most recommended free web space directory is Free Web Hosting (<http://www.free-webhosts.com/>), which has a detailed list of over 500 free web hosting providers with user reviews, ratings, and free hosting searchable database. It is updated daily, and the advanced free web hosting search has 42 options, helping you to find the free hosting package with all the features you need, such as CGI, PHP, MySQL, ASP, SSI, Ruby on Rails, FrontPage server extensions, and even free cpanel web hosting.

For a smaller, more selective list of the best free hosts, there are also these free webspace hosting directories:

Best Free Webspace (<http://www.100-Best-Free-Webspace.com/>)

Free Hosting (<http://www.Absolutely-Free-Hosting.com/>)

Can you really get FREE web hosting?

Yes, there are hundreds of free hosting web sites, as far as not having to pay any money to have your website hosted.

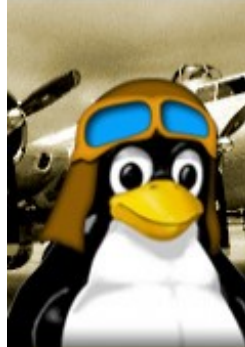
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Free Webspace (<http://www.free-webspace.org/>)

Other (usually less useful) resources include subcategories of freebies sites, search engines and directories, and forums. Your ISP might also supply you with free webhosting.

Hints for finding the best free web hosting service

Generally it is best not to choose a free hosting package with more features than you need, and also check to see if the company somehow receives revenue from the free hosting itself to keep it in business. As already mentioned, it is best to try to get accepted to a more selective free host if possible. Look at other sites hosted there to see what kind of ads are on your site, and the server speed (keep in mind newer hosts will be faster at first). Read the Terms of Service (TOS) and host features to make sure it has enough bandwidth for your site, large webspace and file size limit, and any scripting options you might need. Read free webspace reviews and ratings by other users on free hosting directories. If you don't have your own domain name, you might want to use a free URL forwarding service so you can change your site's host if needed.

Recommended free web hosts

It would be awfully hard to recommend any free web space host and someone not like it, as different people need different web hosting features and have different priorities, and the webhosting quality may change over time. Also some people want free domain hosting (you own the domain), and others might not be able to buy a domain name. Here are some of the most recommended free web hosts, and their main features.

50Webs (<http://www.50webs.com/>) gives you a URL such as <http://you.50webs.com/> (or you can use your own domain name), and offers 60 MB webspace, POP3 email, and unlimited bandwidth. You can upload via a file manger or FTP import. There are no ads or popups placed on your hosted web pages. You can setup multiple addon domains and subdomains under the same web hosting account.

Tripod (<http://www.tripod.lycos.com/>) is controversial. Many people hate the ads they put on your site or its other limitations, but it is one of the oldest and most reliable free web hosts. They give you 20 MB webspace, a subdomain, file manager and editor, and webpage statistics. The bandwidth limit is 1 GB/month. You can upload several file types such as RealAudio, RealVideo, Flash, MP3, and Java; and CGI/Perl, SSI, and FrontPage Server Extensions scripting is supported.

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